

growing an **INCLUSIVE** city

FROM VISION TO REALITY

THE WASHINGTON, DC, COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



HELP SHAPE DC's COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The District's Comprehensive Plan guides how and where we as a city will grow. It describes the city's view of its future, and provides policies and actions to make that future a reality. The Mayor and DC Council use the Comp Plan to guide decisions about how land is used and where capital dollars are spent. Residents and businesses use the Comp Plan to express neighborhood priorities. District agencies use it to protect neighborhood quality, and to evaluate proposals for development and revitalization. The Comp Plan provides guidance on many topics, from affordable housing to mass transit.



THE CURRENT COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The current Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 1984 and was amended in 1985, 1989, 1994 and 1998. It includes chapters (called "elements") that contain the city's policies for land use, transportation, housing, economic development, urban design, environmental protection, historic preservation, human services, public facilities, and downtown. It also includes more detailed plans for each of the city's eight wards.

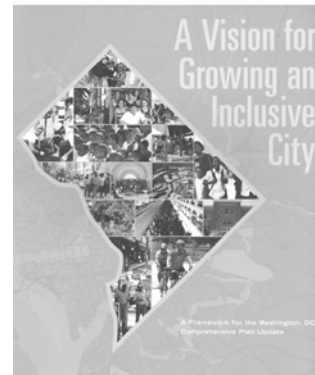
The Comp Plan is now over 20 years and does not address many of the issues facing the city today. When our current Comp Plan was prepared, the median price of a house was about \$90,000 and the median monthly rent was under \$300. Downtown had several large department stores, and the city had 50,000 more residents than it does today. Terms like "homeland security," "internet," and "sustainable development" were unknown. Metrorail was only a few years old, and the DC region was a fraction of its current size.

Today, the District is at the center of a fast growing region, with complex growth and neighborhood conservation issues. The region is expected to add more than a million people in the next 15 years—100,000 in the District of Columbia alone. Our current Comp Plan doesn't provide the necessary guidance to accommodate that growth—or to protect and enhance our neighborhoods as growth occurs.

The DC Office of Planning, at the direction of the Mayor and Council, is in the process of revising the Comprehensive Plan to address current needs and issues. Part of this process involves making the Plan easier to use. The current Plan is nearly 700 pages long and has over 3,500 policies and actions. Through the Comp Plan Revision, maps and graphics are being added and the format is being streamlined. Current data and forecasts are being included. Outdated policies are being replaced, and redundant policies are being combined and stated more clearly. A greater emphasis is being placed on implementation, so that the revised Plan can effectively guide District actions.

THE VISION

One of the most important goals of the Comp Plan is to ensure that all District residents benefit from the city's future growth. This has not always been the case during Washington's recent economic boom. While many have prospered, other residents still face hardships due to high housing costs, limited transportation options, and unemployment. These challenges were on the agenda during Citizen Summit III, when thousands of DC residents came together to discuss a "Vision for Growing an Inclusive City". That Vision is guiding the Comp Plan revision, and shaping many of its policies and actions. To receive a copy of the Vision for Growing an Inclusive City, call 202/442-8812 or e-mail CompPlan@dc.gov.



COMMUNITY AND AGENCY PARTICIPATION

Community input on the Comp Plan didn't end with the last Citizen Summit. Over the last two years, hundreds of residents have participated in the revision process. Community workshops have been held in all parts of the city, and dozens of ANC Commissioners have participated in briefings. A project website has registered over 10,000 visits. A 28-member Comp Plan Revision Citizens Task Force has been meeting regularly for over a year. An interagency working group with representatives from over 40 different DC Government agencies responsible for implementing the Comprehensive Plan also has been convened. This input will ensure that the Plan reflects the priorities of DC residents, and can be effectively carried out after it is adopted.

THE REVISED COMPREHENSIVE PLAN - WHAT'S NEW?

Much of what is in our current Comp Plan remains valid and will be carried forward. However, the revised Plan will contain many new features. For instance, new chapters covering Parks and Open Space, Arts and Culture, and Educational Facilities, will be added. Instead of eight Ward Plans, the revised Plan will have ten "Area Elements." Like the Ward Plans, the Area Elements will provide more detailed direction for sub-areas of the city. However, by using natural edges instead of political boundaries, the plans can look beyond 2010 (when Ward boundaries will change due to redistricting). The revised Comprehensive Plan will also include a large number of maps. One of these maps will "tell the story" of how the city is expected to evolve during the lifetime of the Plan (2005-2025).

MORE INFORMATION - GET INVOLVED

A Draft Comp Plan will be submitted to the District Council during Spring, 2006.

We encourage you to get involved before that time, so your thoughts can be reflected in the Public Review Draft. There are a number of ways you can participate, including:

- Visiting our website: www.Inclusivitycity.org to view background information on the Plan, stay informed about the progress of the revision, and receive notices of important events and updates.
- Contacting us via e-mail at: CompPlan@dc.gov
- Contacting us by phone at: 202/442-8812



growing an *inclusive* city

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THE WASHINGTON, DC COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

NOVEMBER 2005

1

What is a Comprehensive Plan?

A city's Comprehensive Plan (Comp Plan) provides policy and planning guidance on the physical development and redevelopment of the city. It addresses a range of issues: land use, economic development, housing, environmental protection, transportation, public facilities, urban design and historic preservation. It also guides our city's zoning laws, which in turn affects how your property and the properties around you may be used, the types of uses allowed in residential and commercial areas and the amount of parking that must be provided.

In the District of Columbia, the Comp Plan is a legally required document, which includes District Elements — prepared by the DC Office of Planning (OP) — and Federal Elements — prepared by the National Capital Planning Commission (NCPC). In August 2004, NCPC approved the Federal Elements of the Comp Plan, which govern development on federally-owned properties in the District. DC law requires the Comp Plan to include a map of the entire city showing how land will be used in the future, as well as written goals and policies guiding future development.

2

What will a revised Comp Plan mean to the average resident or business?

The Comp Plan may affect the way key properties in your neighborhood and across the city are developed during the coming years. Because it guides how and where we as a city will grow, the Plan influences the future look and feel of our community. The Plan will be used to guide investment in new public facilities like recreation centers and libraries.

The way we plan our city can have a tremendous impact on our lives. For example, we can decide that only certain types of businesses can operate and certain types of hous-

ing be built in specific neighborhoods. We can decide where additional green space, playgrounds and parks are desirable. We can develop guidelines that foster small, local businesses or help attract more stores and restaurants to the business district nearest to your home.

3

Why do we need to revise the Comprehensive Plan?

The District's Comp Plan was originally adopted in 1984, so it is based on data that is over 20 years old. Although it has been amended several times in the past 20 years, the changes were minor. It does not address many of the key issues the city is now facing. The "future"—as envisioned by our 1984 Comprehensive Plan—is already history.

In 2003, a Citizens' Task Force, appointed by the Mayor and City Council, completed an assessment of the Comp Plan. As a result of the assessment, OP and the Task Force recommended that the Comp Plan be thoroughly revised, not just amended. The Task Force found that the existing plan was outdated, difficult to read and understand, lacked maps and graphics, and did not provide the direction needed to address the tough issues facing our city today.

4

How does the Comp Plan relate to the recently completed Washington, DC, "Vision for Growing an Inclusive City?"

The first step in revising the Comp Plan was to develop a long-range vision for our city. More than 3,000 residents participated in the visioning process at the Mayor's Citizens Summit. "A Vision for Growing an Inclusive City" addresses three challenges DC must address as it plans for the future:



1. Creating successful neighborhoods;
2. Increasing access to education and jobs; and
3. Connecting the whole city.

The Vision's overall goal of growing inclusively provides a strong framework for the new Comp Plan, which will establish the policies and actions we need to take to help us achieve the Vision.

The full Vision framework is available on OP's website:
<http://planning.dc.gov>

5

What does "Growing an Inclusive City" really mean?

Demographic data suggests that Washington became more divided by income, race and education during the 1990s. Although the city has experienced an economic boom during the last few years, not everyone has benefited. Growing inclusively is about working harder to ensure that the benefits of DC's prosperity can be enjoyed by all of its residents.

To be that inclusive city, we need a Comp Plan that addresses the social, economic, cultural and physical divides that now exist between residents. Growing inclusively means that we:

- Involve residents in decision-making;
- Ensure that all residents, especially lower-income residents, are provided with affordable housing options, quality education and access to good jobs;
- Minimize the displacement of long-time residents as growth takes place;
- Provide city services and facilities more equitably across the city; and
- Foster mutual respect and communication among residents from different cultural backgrounds.

6

Will this Comp Plan really make an impact?

Yes, if we focus the Comp Plan on the issues that matter the most to DC residents—and develop a realistic strategy for implementation. Whether you are a long-time resident of the District, or have recently moved here from somewhere else, you probably have heard about or even participated in some type of city planning process—which may or may not have actually resulted in positive change. We intend that this Comp Plan will be done in a manner that is technically sound, grounded in local realities, done creatively and in collaboration with District residents. If you

take the time to participate, you will see, feel and live in a different, more inclusive city in the future.

7

What will the Comp Plan actually look like?

The Comp Plan will be written and designed to be a dynamic, user-friendly document, fully accessible to everyone. It will be restructured from its current form to be easier to use, be highly visual, and provide specific implementation guidance for citizens and decisionmakers. Graphics and maps will clearly communicate the Plan's recommendations.

8

Who is working on the plan and how long will it take to complete?

The DC Office of Planning is developing this plan jointly with the community, at the Mayor's request. Other District agencies are also participating, so that the Plan will cover a variety of long-range planning issues. A draft plan is scheduled to be completed in Spring 2006 and approved by the City Council in September 2006.

9

How can I get involved?

DC residents expect to participate in neighborhood planning decisions. The Comp Plan revision offers the opportunity to build on this tradition by developing long-term recommendations for the city as a whole. This is your opportunity to help shape the kind of place our city will be for generations to come. A task force of 28 community and business representatives from across the entire city, appointed by the Mayor and City Council, are guiding the Comp Plan revision process. The Comp Plan team is conducting several rounds of public meetings throughout the District to gather input from as many community members as possible. Smaller group discussions are focusing on specific issues. Hundreds of community members are participating in the process. You can go to **www.inclusivitycity.org** to view much more information and find the dates of meetings in your area as they are scheduled. You can also choose to join the e-mail list and receive notification of important events. Or you can call Jill Diskan, Long Range Planner, DC Office of Planning, at (202) 442-7600.